

September 30, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN PILOT PROGRAM

In response to the April 2, 2002 motion by Supervisor Antonovich, my office provided the attached May 3, 2002, status report (Attachment I) on the feasibility of developing a pilot program with Girls and Boys Town (Boys Town), located in Nebraska. The pilot program is intended to serve foster youth with serious multiple needs. We informed your Board that while a pilot within Los Angeles County is not a viable option, we were exploring the feasibility of a pilot program with a small number of youth that could benefit from the high level of treatment that the Boys Town model offers at its Nebraska facility.

On May 31, 2002 we reported to your Board that a representative from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) visited Boys Town in Nebraska, as is required by the State as an element of the licensing requirements (Attachment II).

On June 27, 2002 we reported that an initial proposal prepared by Boys Town, dated March 4, 2002, was for the placement of youth in its Intensive Residential Treatment Center, an acute psychiatric unit (Attachment III). The program is a locked 40 bed facility funded as a behavioral health program. The cost for the program is \$875 per day per youth. Funding is a major challenge with developing this proposed pilot.

If 10 youth could be placed at the facility at \$875 per day, Boys Town costs to the County would exceed \$3 million annually. In addition to the \$3 million placement costs, the County would incur ancillary costs such as long distance communication and transportation to and from the facility for both the youth and County personnel required to monitor the youth and the pilot. The County would continue to be the responsible administrator with all the duties that function entails.

On August 5, 2002, staff from my office, DCFS, DMH, MacLaren, and Probation met with representatives of Boys Town, including Mr. Patrick Connell from the Boys Town Nebraska operation, to discuss the logistical as well as legal considerations of a pilot. One significant issue involves children's rights in regards to placement in a locked facility. Regulations require that youth under the jurisdiction of the dependency system must consent to treatment. Based on this requirement, participants in the pilot would have to volunteer to be placed at the Nebraska facility.

In order for the State to consider licensing an out-of-State facility, a specific youth must be identified for placement at the facility. After the youth is selected, the County is required to demonstrate that there are no other placement alternatives in the State prior to its consideration of the request for out-of-State placement. If and when the County can demonstrate that there are no other placement options available anywhere in the State, the State can still exercise its right to disallow the request and often rejects the application for placement. Without the State's approval for the placement, the County would be responsible for the total costs of the placement. We have approached the State regarding potential funding to support a pilot at Boys Town but have not been successful in gaining its support. Boys Town is continuing to explore interpretations of the regulations with the State and will keep us informed of any new developments.

In addition to the unresolved financial ramifications, there are fundamental concerns with placing youth out-of-State. The County is striving to implement a community based network of services, including Wraparound, to meet the needs of our dependent youth within their existing community. Placements out-of-State are not conducive to that effort.

As a result of the issues above, we are unable to propose a viable pilot at the Boys Town facility in Nebraska. We appreciate the Boys Town programs in our County and consider them valuable community partners in our system of care, however, we cannot support an out-of-State pilot.

Each Supervisor
September 30, 2002
Page 3

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information, or your staff may contact Kathy House at (213) 974-1323.

DEJ:DL
JEJ:KH:kd

Attachments

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
 Director, Department of Children and Family Services
 Director, Department of Mental Health
 Administrator, MacLaren Children's Center